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TAGS: PREL MCAP MARR NATO PINR PL
SUBJECT: NATO SUMMIT A MIXED BAG FOR POLAND

REF: WARSAW 360

Classified By: Ambassador Ashe for Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) Former Polish Ambassador to NATO Jerzy Nowak told the Ambassador April 6 that the results of the recently concluded NATO Summit meeting were mixed for Warsaw. Poland welcomed decisions on beefing up the NATO-led force in Afghanistan, cooperation with Russia, and agreement to begin work on a new Strategic Concept, but was deeply disappointed with the "Quad's" disproportionate influence on major decisions. Nowak did not advocate abandonment of NATO's consensus decision-making, but he said Poland was looking for ways to give smaller Allies a stronger voice, especially at organizational levels below the North Atlantic Council. He said Poland appears to have support from a few older and newer Allies: Turkey, Canada, and some Benelux countries, as well as Romania and the Czech Republic. Citing support from Foreign Minister Radoslaw Sikorski, Nowak said Poland hoped that the upcoming revision of the Strategic Concept would offer opportunities to streamline Alliance decision-making and give smaller Allies greater weight in the process.

¶2. (C) Nowak said the selection of the new Secretary General (SYG) particularly grated on the Poles. Warsaw welcomes Danish Prime Minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen's Atlanticism and his balanced understanding of Russia-related issues, which should serve to bridge the gap between older and newer members of the Alliance. However, Nowak said senior Polish officials were disturbed by the continuing stereotype among some of NATO's older members that a Pole cannot deal even-handedly with Moscow, and the opaque manner in which Rasmussen was selected. He asserted that the U.S. appears to have accepted Rasmussen as the candidate supported by France and Germany. Unlike Turkey, which won concessions for dropping its opposition to Rasmussen (mainly U.S. support for Ankara's EU aspirations), Poland received nothing in return for not pressing Sikorski's candidacy more forcefully. Nowak noted that, among other concessions, Warsaw is seeking relocation of NATO infrastructure to Poland, and some flag-level appointments for Polish military officers. Moreover, Nowak claimed that Rasmussen had made no effort to reach out to Poland during his campaign for Secretary General.

¶3. (C) BIO NOTE: Nowak, who served as Poland's Ambassador to NATO 2002-07, is semi-retired and President of the Euro-Atlantic Association in Warsaw. He was also the unofficial "campaign manager" for Sikorski's unsuccessful bid for Secretary General. According to Nowak, at Sikorski's request he has returned to the Foreign Ministry for at least the next year, to coordinate Poland's position on NATO's Strategic Concept, head up Warsaw's upcoming strategic defense review and formulate Poland's response to Russian

President Dmitriy Medvedev's European security initiative.

¶4. (C) COMMENT: Reftel reported previously on Polish disappointment with the NATO SYG outcome and the way the decision was made. Making matters worse, at the summit the Polish delegation suffered from a lack of coordination (if not outright contradictory moves) between the Presidency and the Government, with President Kaczynski expressing Polish support for Rasmussen during the Friday dinner, apparently without heeding MFA tactical recommendations. The coordination breakdown resulted in post-Summit public mutual recriminations between presidential and government officials, while neutral commentators blame both sides for an embarrassing episode that has harmed Poland's reputation. Despite the spectacular failure, or because of it, we expect the Poles to continue their efforts to make Alliance decision-making procedures more transparent and more open to smaller Allies' input. The Poles will continue to insist that the ten newer members of NATO be treated as full members and share in holding positions of responsibility.

ASHE